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COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
Sub-Commission on Prevention of
Discrimination and Protection
of Minorities
Forty-fifth session
Item 4 of the provisional agenda

REVIEW OF FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS IN FIELDS WITH WHICH THE SUB-COMMISSION HAS BEEN CONCERNED

Report submitted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization:

UNESCO activities concerning promoting and protecting the rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities

I. UNESCO'S ACTIVITIES ON THE CULTURAL RIGHTS OF PERSONS BELONGING TO MINORITIES IN 1993-1994

1. The agenda of the 141st session of the Executive Board of UNESCO had a special item 5.4.4. devoted to the protection and promotion within UNESCO's fields of competence of the rights of persons belonging to minorities. The Executive Board discussed, inter alia, the provisions of the General Assembly Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities. This discussion will be continued at the 142nd session of the Executive Board, as well as at the forthcoming twenty-seventh General Conference of UNESCO which will approve the programme and budget for 1994-1995.

2. The issue of the UNESCO Courier (June 1993) devoted to the questions of the rights of persons belonging to minorities comprises an article entitled "A protective framework", which discusses the provisions of the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities.

3. The Division of Human Rights and Peace has sent a circular letter to the National Commissions and the Permanent Delegations of Member States requesting them to provide this Division with copies of relevant constitutional provisions and other laws and legislative acts concerning the rights of persons belonging to minorities. This material would serve for the UNESCO publication comprising a collection of national legislation on the rights of persons belonging to minorities which is foreseen for 1994-1995.

4. Three studies have been undertaken on the situation in the field of protection of cultural rights of persons belonging to minorities in Africa, Asia and Europe:

"The legal protection of cultural rights and identities of minorities in Asia", by Dr. Rahat Nabi-Khan;

Les Etats africains et la question des minorités",
by Dr. Jean Yangoumale;

"The status of cultural rights of minorities in Europe after 1989", prepared under contract with the National Commission of Hungary for UNESCO. This study contains a number of very useful definitions and descriptions of the different types of minority rights.

Meetings on the cultural rights of persons belonging to minorities

5. Several meetings on different aspects of this subject will be organized in 1993-1994.

6. A workshop on "Democracy and minorities in post-totalitarian States" is organized by the Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology of the Russian Academy of Sciences, in collaboration with UNESCO, in Moscow from 8 to 10 September 1993. Scholars and experts from Europe, North America and States on the territory of the former Soviet Union, and representatives of international organizations will be invited to analyse the political and legal status and situation of minorities under the conditions of democratic reform in the States on the territory of the former Soviet Union and countries of central and eastern Europe, as well as to determine and evaluate the most essential issues of, and to elaborate recommendations which will be based on, the Declaration of the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities, as well as on Commission on Human Rights resolution 1993/24, entitled "Rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities".

7. An international expert meeting on "New forms of discrimination" is being organized by the Marangopoulos Foundation with the support of and in collaboration with the UNESCO Division of Human Rights and Peace, in Athens in March-April 1994.

8. The Conference will discuss measures to ensure implementation of such international instruments as the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities (1992), the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1966), the International Convention for the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Their Families (1990), the Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials and the Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials.

II. ACTIVITIES ON THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS BELONGING TO MINORITIES ENVISAGED BY THE DRAFT PROGRAMME AND BUDGET FOR THE PERIOD 1994-1995

A. Activities directly linked to the rights of persons belonging to minorities

9. With regard to subprogramme V. 2.1 (project 27 C/5) "Research for the promotion of peace, human rights and democracy", under the section entitled "To contribute to the ongoing reflection on new prospects in international law concerning human rights and to the promotion of academic freedom and cultural rights, including those of persons belonging to minorities" the following activities are included:

(a) Studies on the exercise of cultural rights and the rights of minorities in various regions (Africa, Latin America, Asia and the Pacific, central and eastern Europe);

(b) Studies on advisory policy relating to the protection of the rights of persons belonging to minorities.

B. Activities indirectly linked to the rights of persons belonging to minorities

10. The promotion of the rights of persons belonging to minorities is closely linked to the protection of human rights in general, and to the consolidation of peace and democratic procedures.

11. For this reason, most of the activities under subprogramme V.2.1 (project 27 C/5), particularly "To promote the development of a culture of peace and devise innovative methods for the early prevention and peaceful management of conflicts" and "To contribute to the consolidation of democratic processes by analysing various concrete experiences and promoting worldwide exchanges of information", as well as some activities under subprogramme V.2.2 (Project 27 C/5) "Education for peace, human rights and democracy", are linked to respect for the rights of persons belonging to minorities.

12. With regard to prevention of discrimination against persons belonging to minorities, subprogramme V.2.3 (project 27 C/5), entitled "Struggle against all forms of discrimination", includes the prevention of "discrimination based on racial, national or ethnic origin, religion or belief, or any other grounds, and discrimination against minorities".